

Re: RM-10808: Proposed deletion of the requirement to display proficiency in International Morse.

I am in favor of ELIMINATING the FCC's Amateur Service Element 1 test, but would propose that it be replaced with a few multiple choice questions added to the Element 2 (Technician Class license) written test. The questions would provide a few short Morse code words (posed as a series of printed dots and dashes) and ask the test taker to pick the correct translation. The text string should be a typical short "CQ" or similar communication of no more than 10-15 characters. For example: "CQ CQ CQ de N1ABC".

Despite dropping the Element 1 test, it would be worthwhile to continue to provide an incentive for users to develop and maintain Morse skills. While many amateur users have no personal interest in CW (or do so only with computer aided devices), it is true that CW and similar modes do provide better communications during poorer periods of propagation. Such benefits can also be achieved with other emission modes like PSK31, RTTY, or the newer digital voice modes.

A small slice of each Amateur Service band should continue to be reserved for CW & Data only. I am sure that the ARRL, and many other international amateur service organizations, would continue to provide contest incentives for particular modes. This would provide continued incentives for interested amateur operators to keep their skills alive without the need to test new prospective licensees.

The benefits would certainly be increased number of HF users. Increased interest in Amateur radio, and increased purchasing of HF radio equipment (consumers ARE driving our economy). In past cases where the Morse requirement was dropped (US Technician Class and UK Foundation Class licenses), the number of new applicants increased significantly -- to reverse the then existing trend of year-by-year reduction in the number of licensees.

Respectively submitted on 24-OCT-2003.